325 The anvil is a flat stone. The smiths sit on similarly shaped stones beside the anvil while they work.

They do not use tongs. The red-hot iron is set into banana stalks which have a high moisture content, and thus the iron can be held in the hand while being forged. If the object being forged happens to have a point, the latter is driven into a piece of wood, and with this improvised handle it can be held quite comfortably.

To cut off a piece of iron, they bend it in both directions until it breaks and falls apart. The edges and the rough surfaces of the anvil are also used in forging. For example, if the iron is to be cut in two at a certain point, that portion is hammered thin, repeatedly [157] bent in both directions, and finally laid over a hollow portion of the anvil and separated with a few light blows.

● [306] The rather highly developed jewelry industry requires a considerable production of very thin iron and copper wire. This is wound around bracelets and anklets.

The piece of metal is first forged into a thick, uneven piece of wire, and later this is drawn out to the desired thinness.

The actual wire drawing is done without heat. Forged wire is repeatedly drawn through a cone-shaped hole in an iron bolt. The narrower outlet of the bolt is gradually made smaller as the soft metal is hammered. As the wire is pulled through, the edges of the bolt yield more and more, so that the wire is thicker at the end than at the beginning. To counteract this, the wire is alternately pulled through the bolt in the reverse direction.

After the opening of the bolt has been narrowed by hammering, first of all the uneven edges must be smoothed. For this purpose a well-sharpened needle set into a wooden handle is used. The needle is put into the opening of the bolt from both sides and twisted around. Then the end of the wire is filed so that it can be threaded into the bolt. Thereupon the protruding end of the wire is clamped down with a special device. The wire is drawn without the use of pincers.

The clamp used in place of pincers consists of a V-shaped piece of iron. The protruding bit of wire is placed between the two branches of this V-shaped piece and clamped by means of an iron ring set on the V. The clamp must then be drawn slightly away from the bolt. After this, while the wire is still sufficiently